

and the lower end is propped against a skin-covered bowl that serves as a sounding board. It is held in place with the right foot which is inserted between the bow and the string. The player uses her right hand to strike the string with a wooden stick -- if the women sitting beside her do not do this -- and with her left hand she plucks like a violin player. They also use their chin in plucking, in that they rest their heads, halfway back, for a moment against the upper end of the string. Generally several of the women sitting around beat in time upon the string with wooden sticks. 533 534

I myself saw no other string instrument beside the bow among the Hottentots. I encountered the gora with the quill (66) only among the

66. Th. Hahn. Die Nama-Hottentotten. Ein Beitrag zur südatrikanischen Ethnographie (Globus, Bd. XII, 1867).

Bechuans. To be sure, Hottentots spoke of a guitar-like instrument that they make in imitation of European models; they call it ramgyib or !gū·/tsib (from !gu = "to cover," and in this case: to span the sounding board with a skin. See also the footnote to Folk tale XLV.). [Plate XV. A Topnaar Hottentot.]

[375] The main characteristic of the action which is supposed to be depicted in the musical pantomime lies musically in the rhythm. In hunting scenes it expresses the various gaits of the horse and the wild animals: the tracking of the hartebeest, the first chase at a gallop, the flight of the shot animal and its defeat -- all of this is reproduced by the rhythm of the wooden sticks. The spurring of the hunting horse, the death blow and the death rattle of the dying animal is expressed with gestures and inarticulated sounds. The monotonous intervals that are plucked on the string are only accompaniment. 533 535

Similarly portrayed are the rolling of a wagon, the yoking of the oxen, the unhitching of a lame or feeble animal, the snapping of the whip, and so forth.

They are very fond of imitating the practices of wild animals. I saw a woman imitate a baboon with great animation and devotion to her rôle: how it picks up insects from the ground, how it bends over the waterhole to drink, jealously wards off the thirsty animals pressing after him, how it casually trots, how it becomes frightened upon scenting danger and flees when surprised.

In all these entertainments the music remains in the background⁵³³
even though the strings and wooden sticks are constantly in action. ⁵³⁵ ●

2. The Reed-dance Song

The tones become melodies only in the song of the reed dance. ⁵³³
Here the ancient musical instruments of the Hottentots, the reed ⁵³⁴
pipes, xi-ti, come into their own. [Fig. Reed Pipes made of root
bark with a tuning rod (b). 1/6 natural size.] The pipes, as their
name indicates, are generally cut from reeds; but in dry stretches
where there is no reed growth they are made from the roots of Acacia
horrida Willd. The root segment that is cut in the shape of a rod
is either debarked completely by tearing off the bark (a), or it is slit
lengthwise and the bark is peeled from the wood. The root that has
been slit lengthwise is then firmly wrapped with a piece of bark in a
spiral as though with a band (c). The pipe produced in this way is
closed at one end and filled up with milk so that it will not dry. The
pipes are tuned by adjusting the firm grass plug which closes the pipe
end. After use, the pipe is again filled with milk.

[376] A complete reed pipe orchestra comprises at least nine
musicians, each one with his own specially tuned reed or reed passage.
Just as we distinguish the first and the second violin, the Hottentot
distinguishes the first through the ninth reed pipe; only he does not
count them, but names them individually. He makes the following
distinctions: [Figure -- Reed pipe scale.]

1. *xi-ti, that is "the little reeds," all tuned the same,
with four to six placed side by side in each hand.

2. *nona-gu, the triplets, or collectively called *nona-b, the
treys, tuned the same and held in one hand.

3. *inani-gu, the sextuplets, or called collectively *inani-b, the
"sixers," held in one hand and tuned the same.

4. *//hũ-irob, or //hũ-irokxa, accordingly as the blower holds
only one or two in his hand.

5. ai-ās, "who (-s) cries (ā, here with the meaning: "to make a
lamenting noise") in advance (ai)." Only one man in the whole orchestra
has this pipe whereas with the further exception of number 6 all other
reed voices can be filled doubly or triply. This reed gives the note
by which all the other reeds are tuned. Among the others the first to
tune in is

6. the reed pipe, which is called ālgā/s, that is "who cries after-wards (lgā/s, 'back')." After this the other pipes tune up:

7. *go/ma's "the cow."

8. !a-rob, finally

9. *//hū/i-b, the reed with the lowest note.

The tuning rod, *//kxa-chaib, with which the grass or bast plug [377] inside the pipe is adjusted or "chased back" (//kxaē) as it were in order to adjust the pitch completes the instrumental equipment.

The reeds are held between the thumb and the other four extended fingers in such a way that the ends which are blown lie on a level with the upper horizontal edge of the index finger. A complete reed scale or phrase comprises about two octaves. Only in one case did I have the opportunity to check the pitch of the individual reeds in a complete scale that had just been tuned up. The results yielded the distribution of tones that are represented in the preceding figure.

The music of each reed piper consists of individually enunciated tones that harmonize with one or several rhythmically identical tones of the other pipers. These reed tones give the beat for the dancers and singers who carry the melody. Many reed songs have no text. (Whether they never had one or whether it has simply been forgotten cannot be determined.) In the simplest case the subject is indicated by gestures and the melody is sung with a very few sounds.

The dance steps of the men are a sort of low hopping executed simultaneously with both legs, the knees slightly bent and the feet placed one in front of the other. In this manner the dancer slowly and jerkily moves forward, bent over, the head bowed to his breast and his lips on the pipe. The women *chassé* forwards with small and often extremely delicate steps, with the rear slightly protruding, undulating their hips, gently clapping their hands together before their faces, and singing in a loud voice, sometimes with an expression of great excitement. The number of dancers is not fixed.

The Hottentots' pleasure in the dance is typified by a little story in which they make fun of themselves: at a watering place they had ambushed several Bergdamaras. When the Kaffirs saw that they were in a trap, they began to execute a dance. Dancing, they retreated farther and farther, and, when the watching Hottentots finally recalled their murder plans, had escaped.

Every reed-dance song has a special theme. Thus, for example, in the following example the arrival of the bull at the water hole is illustrated. As the malevolent ponderous animal slowly wanders to

the water hole, grazing alone in the pasture after the rutting time, mut-⁵³³
tering to himself, moving his head from side to side -- this is the way ⁵³⁵
the Hottentot pictures him, accompanied by the reed tones (or by an
accordion or a harmonica), he sings with a few simple sounds for the dance
of the grazing bull:

[378] The Song of the Grazing Bull

[Translator's note: four musical bars omitted.]

The following reed dance song accompanies a lively pantomimic
imitation of shoeing horses and is therefore called the song of horse
shoeing, Ynaufais.

The man who represents the horse has a thong in his mouth and by
means of this he is held fast, as though on a rein, by a man standing
before him. To another man, standing behind him, he extends a foot
to be shoed. A fourth plays the part of the bellows: he lies flat on his
stomach, extends his lower legs into the air and lets them be moved al-
ternately backward and forward from the knee, in time with the music,
by a fifth man who stands behind him. Before him stands the smith with
a stone in his hand as a hammer and waits for the iron to get hot. All
the others, including the reed blowers, dance around this group in a
circle and sing a wordless but rhythmically, unmistakable imitation of
the blows of the hammer: [Translator's note: six bars of music omitted.]

In other dance songs, in place of the pantomime, we find that the
situation which is being sung about is indicated by a cue word. Thus,
one Hottentot, who occasionally crept into the cattle kraal of a neigh-
boring village at night in order to milk goat's milk into his mouth, ex-
pressed in a song his joy about the fact that he had never been caught.
He sang its single words, B(e)ridaise, b(e)ridaise, "you goat milk, you
goat milk" to a melody that was just as unpretentious but that his
friends liked to request for the dance: [Translator's note: six bars of
music have been omitted.]

[379] On the same low level there is a song for which the following
event is the basis. The singer had beaten his oxen guard with a sjambok
because the guard had let a valuable animal run away on the trip. The
punishment was so severe that the mistreated man lodged a complaint
against his master with Captain Paul Frederik in Bethanie. The latter
sent one of his men on horse after the guilty man and had him seized.
The only words, which recur like a refrain in the otherwise unarticu-
lated song, refer to the color of the above-mentioned horse, which had
a white stripe on its forehead and white feet and therefore had the Boer

name witvoet. The circle of friends knew, when they heard this word, 533
what the song was all about. The melody goes: 535

Song of The White-footed Horse

[Translator's note: eleven bars of music omitted.]

Whereas the previously-mentioned dance melodies lack a complete text, in the following song it is at least loosely attached as a point of reference. In the brothers' war for the rule over the Bethanie Hottentots, Paul Frederik had occupied the most important water spots of the territory and Cornelius, caught in a tight spot, finally had to ask his brother for water. The text* of the song that concerns this war between

* In all the following texts and their explanations, with few exceptions (for example where it is a question of newly mentioned words), I have neglected to add the signs for the musical modifications of the Nama sounds (see, p. 342 ff.). In the detailed analysis of the subsequently following folk tale texts the purely phonetic consideration is dispensable for the comprehension of the plot and hence makes it possible to save much space in printing. A theoretical reason for a simplified orthography of the text has been mentioned above (p. 363).

brothers, a program for the music as it were, goes:

"Ti !gātse, //nāti gōse !gaĩ ēta //gami āre !"

!abuti ātsa //gui ēts //gami ā

"//guita tite."

"My brother, be good, be a friend and let me drink some water!"

"Put down your weapons and then drink water."

"I will not put them down."

[380] The relevant dance melody goes: [Translator's note: five bars of music omitted.]

In the Song of Kaukaumb text and melody are just as loosely connected as in this war song. Kaukaumb is a watering place in Namib, located on the southernmost of the three routes which can be taken by oxcart traffic between Angra Pequena and the hinterland. The road by way of Kaukaumb is the most difficult, and the carts often remain stuck in the sand for days. A Hottentot with the nickname *nau·bas (e)nā·b.

that is "he who plays for his own dance," selected as a text the simple words: !Gaokya-oetse, hā-ta ~~to~~-are "Kaukaussib, let me get out!" The constantly repeated melody to this text goes: [Translator's note: five bars of music omitted.] 533 535

The text is more closely connected to the melody in the Hyena Song. This song portrays the hyena as it creeps around the cattle kraal at night and is discovered. The pantomimic presentation of this theme with its reed music, its song and dance, is very amusing: the men group themselves in a semi-circle, and opposite them the girls do likewise. The circle formed in this way with its two opposite openings (where the men's row meets the girls' row) represents a cattle kraal and the girls represent the cattle. To the accompaniment of the singing and the sounds of the reed music of all the people standing in the circle, one of the men steps out of the row and, with deeply bent knees, creeps into the kraal, moving past the row of girls with the gestures of a blood-thirsty hyena. After a while three other men step out of the row and pretend to ride up to the same opening of the kraal where the hyena had entered. With gestures and poses they tie up their horses, discover the tracks of the hyena and follow them until they suddenly notice the animal. Then they hurry back to the horses and take up pursuit. Meanwhile the hyena has left the kraal, but is caught outside it and killed. During this pantomime, to the rhythm [381] of the reed pipers, the following words are sung incessantly as a warning to the cattle-hungry predatory animal: [Translator's note: four bars of music and one line of Hottentot text omitted.]

"Hyena (the nickname will be discussed later), this (i. e., the cattle of this kraal) is man's property!"

3. Songs Without Dance and Pantomime

At an early date I became acquainted with the Hottentot's pleasure in music by itself (dissociated from dance and pantomime). It was on the evening of a hard working day for our Hottentots; since early morning they had been dragging spars for the construction of sea signals to the top of the steep coastal cliffs, and now, long after the evening meal was past, they were still squatting around their fire. In the tents of the white men it had already become quiet and even the Cameroon sailors were asleep in their sailcloth berths. Then, from the miserable 533

In Lbderitz Bay and around Keetmanshoop half-grown boys and young men, when they wanted to make fun of girls, used to sing:
 [Translator's note: four bars of music and text omitted.]

The teasing is implicit in the ambiguity of the text. The words in themselves, "you, my cheek (ʔōse)," are straightforward. But not (383) ʔōse is intended, but ʔōs, that is, a possession, a "thing" (of any sort) and here specifically: the most preciously guarded possession of the virgin body which the boys boldly call their own.

4. The Dance Without Accompaniment

Dances without musical accompaniment came to my attention only once. It was a nocturnal dance with the name ʔsū.ʔu tsa.ʔbe --- da.ʔba tsa.ʔbe. These at the same time are the words that the dancers constantly repeat in time with their steps. The dance is performed by young and old, even by the oldest people of both sexes. Three people take part in it: two who approach each other in a hostile manner and a third who tries to separate the quarrelers by dancing between them every time they approach each other.

The step itself is simple: the right foot is scraped forward and then again half backwards in short paces. Immediately after every such scraping motion the left foot, stamping with the whole sole, is brought forward; at the same time the body sinks into a slight knee bend. The movement goes along slowly and jerkily, but it is not ponderous and it is even graceful when a young body executes it lithely. The movement of the right foot accompanies the words ʔsū.ʔa- and da.ʔba-; the stamping of the left ~~foot~~ occurs on the first syllable of the word lying between them, tsa.ʔbe.

D. Beginnings of a Literature

1. Point of Origin

Outside of the narrow circle of his daily needs, and second to his interest in his own kind, the animal world is the favorite playground of the Hottentot's phantasy. He comes into close contact with domestic animals from the very first day of his employment as a herd boy. Left

274 SOCIAL HABITS AND CUSTOMS

881 Immediately she is in the hut, her relations commence slaughtering
574 animals to provide in her honour the feast known as *kharu /ap*,
"menstruation killing." All her nearer relatives contribute to this
killing, even her older married brothers, if she has any. Everything
slaughtered must be female, and above all a heifer must be provided.
The entrails, pluck, etc., of these animals must on no account be eaten
by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl. The visiting
friends enjoy them. This *kharu /ap* is the great feast for the women,
all who have already passed through the puberty rites being able to
[841] take part in it. The only exceptions to this rule are that no menstruating
[843] woman may eat of the meat, "lest the girl's period never stop," nor
any pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return."
No man or boy either was formerly supposed to take any part at
all in the feast, but nowadays, owing to the extreme poverty of the
people, males are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first
animals killed. The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut,
while the *aba tards* takes her share, always part of the outer flesh,
inside. The girl and her friends remain in the *kharu oms*, drinking
plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can. As the time of her
seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions,
regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the
kraal begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male
and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined.
881 Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of
783 purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the *aba tards* enters the girl's enclosure, and
cleanses her of all her *axu /aip*, child dirt. This is very thoroughly
done with melted butter and moist cowdung, every inch of the girl's
body being well scoured. The *aba tards* smears the salve all over the
body of the girl, and after allowing it to dry slightly rolls it off again
with the palm of her hand. She then collects it carefully, and hides it
in an ant-heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is
now given a complete set of new clothing, the old woman carrying
off the discarded one. In former days it was at this time that the girl
[291] changed her maiden's apron for the full woman's dress; hence these
puberty rites are sometimes referred to as the *brook-kaross slagt*,
from the Dutch term *brook-kaross* (lit. breeches-kaross) applied to
the woman's rear apron. Next the girl is led into the outer hut by
the *aba tards*, with whom she prepares a meal for the other women
assembled to meet her. Nowadays she prepares tea or coffee, but

276 SOCIAL HABITS AND CUSTOMS

881
574 may be as fruitful as a young cow and have many children. The other friends repeat the wish.¹

881
535 Towards evening the girl's friends enter the hut to fetch her out, and for the last time she must leave it by the special opening made for her at the back. Her friends surround her, and for a time try to keep her from the view of the youths, for she is very shy. The youths now start the reed dance, forming the inner ring, while the girls, with the *oaxesis* in their midst, dance round them in an outer ring. Every now and then there is a change of partners, and gradually the youths get to the side of the girl and choose her as partner, till in the end her shyness has all gone. During the dancing she throws [777] *lucks* over the men and boys as she sees them; this is supposed to bring good luck. The dancing often lasts through the night, and when it is over the final round of rites begins, reintroducing the girl to her daily tasks, "freeing her, as it were," says Mrs. Hoernlé, "from the spell under which she has hung."

981 Early on the following morning she is led out of her hut by the *aba sards*, accompanied by her girl and boy friends. She is conducted round the kraal, and as she goes along picks up earth from the cattle-folds and strews it about, plucks twigs and blossoms from the various trees and bushes she passes by, and also scatters *lucks* as she goes. Every male thing, too, she touches, be it ram, calf, or man, as well as the milking vessels in the huts. The explanation given for this was that such a young girl brings fertility to all she touches, and that the day after she had come out of her hut it was sure to rain and there would be plenty in the land.² Next she milks a cow, if possible a young cow calving for the first time, the *aba sards* supporting her arm as she does so. This milk is /*sa*, to be drunk only by the old woman herself or others of her age. Once this milking has taken place, the girl can resume her milking duties with impunity.

981
783 Similarly she is reintroduced to all her other daily tasks by the *aba sards*. They gather wood together, collect roots and berries together in the veld, and so on. Finally, towards evening, when the usual time comes for getting the household supply of water, they go together, accompanied by all the old women of the kraal, to the water-hole. Here the *aba sards* takes wet mud from the water and rubs it on the girl's legs, then with a branch in her hand splashes water over the girl. Finally both of them take hold of the branch and strike the

¹ "Die Nama-Hottentoten," 307, quoted by Hoernlé; cf. Wilson, op. cit., 200.

² Cf. also Hoernlé, *Reichardt*, 17; Alexander, loc. cit.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Nama

Cape Hottentots

WORSHIP OF THE MOON

375

There is, however, some ground for supposing that, like the Bushmen, they formerly invoked the Moon. A number of the earliest writers state that at new moon and at full moon the people spent the night in dancing, singing, and merrymaking,¹ and Valentijn also speaks of their sitting at new moon on the bank of a river and throwing balls of clay into the water.² It is by no means clear what was the exact meaning of this proceeding; one suggestion is that it was a rain-making rite, but there is no evidence to support this view. Kolb, again, says that the Cape Hottentots looked on the Moon as their visible God, which they called *Gowaja* or "Great Chief". At new moon and at full moon they would dance, jump, and gesticulate all through the night in its honour, and looking towards it would sing: "Be welcome, give us plenty of honey, give grass to our cattle, that we may get plenty of milk."³ And similarly Roos and Marais write of the Naman: "Their religion consists principally in worshipping and praising the new moon. For when it appears the men place themselves together in a circle and blow on a hollow pipe or similar instrument, whereupon the women begin to clap their hands, and dance round the men, continually crying out that the last moon had protected them and their cattle well, and they hoped the same from this new moon. In addition the first Cabonas [//Habona or //Haboben] whom we met praised the moon especially for having brought into their land a people from whom they had received so much good."⁴ The dance described here is the ordinary reed dance of the Naman, but the invocation of the new moon shows clearly that the occasion was more than a mere social festivity.

The facts noted above, sketchy as they are, seem to indicate beyond doubt that the Hottentots revered the Moon. Nowadays the prayers are no longer heard, and the worship has ceased, but the new moon is always hailed in welcome, and at full moon "the old heathens with the young people" still hold their dances to the music of the reed pipes, *rommelpot*, or the fiddle.⁵ The Moon, as we have seen, also figures in the mythology of the people, where it is associated with the origin of death: it promises immortality to men, and when they are deceived by the hare, it is also the avenger, punishing the faithless messenger. Both it and the sun are said to have lived on earth before

1771
821

534
535

821
771
773

¹ Dapper, op. cit., 177; Wilke, "Reise nach van Pienburg," 104; Thunberg, op. cit., 1, 2; Hahn, op. cit., 39, 40 (quoting Piltuchen and Vogel).

² *Out en Meer over India*, part v, 198 (quoted by Hahn, op. cit., 38).

³ *Verhandlungen der Ges. d. Wiss. zu Berlin*, 1841, 1842.

⁴ "Rapport van den Heere van Tellingh," 96.

⁵ Oliph, op. cit., 25.

CHAPTER XIV

ART AND KNOWLEDGE

DECORATIVE AND PLASTIC ART

532 JUDGED by the standard of the Bushmen, the Hottentots are distinctly poor in artistic productions. Painting and engraving on rock, one of the outstanding features in the culture of the former, does not appear ever to have been practised by the latter. Their decorative art at the present time is confined mainly to scratching or incising simple rows of dots or lines of crude chevron, zigzag or fishbone pattern on the outer surface of their metal armbands and rings. Occasionally also simple triangular designs are burned round the mouth of their wooden vessels, or scratched on the stems of their serpentine pipes; while the clay pots they formerly made are sometimes found decorated round the neck with rows of dots or short, broad lines, apparently produced by incising.¹ No other form of decorative art is known to occur.

532 The rudiments of a plastic art may be noticed among the young boys, who often model toys out of clay, which they burn in the fire to obtain shades of colour as well as hardness. These toys consist in figures of human beings, cattle, game and other animals, sometimes also in group compositions such as a team of oxen pulling a wagon. Schulze describes and figures some of them, which are skilfully modelled and by no means devoid of artistic appeal, in some cases even showing a lively sense of caricature, as in representations of Europeans.² But the talent here shown is not carried over into later life, and no modelling or carving of any description analogous to this is done by adults.

MUSIC AND DANCING

533 If the Hottentots are deficient in the plastic arts, their musical talent at least is highly developed. The joy in imitative representation, in the fancy-free expression of stored-up impressions, lives in both young and old. Their delight and talent in mimicry is shown in

¹ Schulze, *Namaland and Kalahari*, 249-51; Schöfeland, "Hottentot and Bushman Pottery," *passim* and pl. II.

² *Op. cit.*, 310-12; cf. Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentoten," 335.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Nama

MUSIC AND DANCING

401

pantomime, their musical sense in the use of musical instruments and a song, and their finer artistic feeling in the dance. Only in a few exceptional cases do we find these different art forms practised in isolation; as a rule, just like the emotions underlying them, they are intimately combined in the same performance.

The musical instruments of the Hottentots¹ include some of those found among the Bushmen, such as the /goura, the /gubo, the ramgyib ("ramakie") and the "rommelpot". Of these the /goura is specially important from the ethnological point of view. As previously mentioned, it is a form of musical bow having the peculiarity of being sounded by means of a piece of quill connecting one end of the chord with the end of the bow-stave. Though various forms of the musical bow, including the /gubo, are found widely spread over Africa, the /goura is a specialized type somewhat sharply separated from the others. Its occurrence is confined mainly to the Hottentots and the Southern Bushmen, so that it constitutes a common culture trait of some significance. It is now also found among some of the Southern Bantu, but has almost certainly been taken over by them from either the Bushmen or the Hottentots.

Schultze describes in addition the ordinary musical bow, *lxrab*, which he noted among the Naman.² The stave is made from a thin piece of acacia wood, and the chord from the back-sinew of the goat, or, better still, from sheep-gut. The women are the performers. They sit on the ground, with the upper end of the bow resting on the left shoulder, while the lower end, propped up against a skin-covered bowl serving as a sounding-board, is held there by means of the foot, inserted between the stave and the chord. The performer picks at the chord with a small stick held in the right hand, while with the left hand she holds the bow like the head of a violin. Usually several of the women sitting round beat in time on the chord with their sticks.

From the musical point of view the chief characteristic of the theme represented in the musical pantomime performed with this instrument lies in rhythm. In hunting scenes this expresses the different types of movement of horses and game. The tracking of the kareboest, the first galloping pursuit, the flight of the wounded animal and its overthrow, all this is indicated in the time beaten with

¹ *Erzählung von der Gauri-Hoffnung*, 122-3; *Spartan, Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, 120; *Feinich, Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika's*, 126-7; *Schinz, Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 91-6; *van Fraunce, Nama and Damara*, 221; *Schulze*, op. cit., 374.

² *Op. cit.*, 374-5.

MUSIC AND DANCING

403

them with a dance on reed-pipes, or better, bark-pipes, is *aba xaire*. The profane reed-dances or reed-songs are of a very different nature. Either the fate of a hero who fell in a battle or lost his life on a hunting expedition is deplored; and on such an occasion a performance is connected with it."¹

The reed dances are usually held in the evening and often last through the whole night, especially when there is moonlight. The occasions of the *igein*, religious dances, are naturally determined by the character of the dance. Those in which the Moon is invoked are held at New Moon and at Full Moon; Hahn mentions another, in which *Tsui //Goab* is prayed to for rain, which is held when the Pleiades first appear above the eastern horizon; still another, in which *Gurub*, the Thunder, is invoked, even takes place, as we have seen, when a heavy thunderstorm is approaching.² The "profane" dances are held on any festive occasion, especially when anybody is emerging from a */nau* seclusion, as, e.g., in the girls' puberty ceremony. If any illustrious stranger visits a kraal, he also is often welcomed with a reed-dance, an honour accorded to several of the early European travellers.³ But in all probability any bright evening, whether specially significant or not, provides the occasion for such an entertainment.

In these dances⁴ the men normally form a ring, all facing inwards, each with the upper part of his body bent forward, and his lips on the pipe. Then, to the accompaniment of their music, they hop up and down on both legs simultaneously, the knees slightly bent and one foot in front of the other, and move about jerkily and slowly in this way. The women, "trolling" or singing with loud voices and clapping their hands in front of the face to the rhythm of the music, dance round the men in a larger outer ring. They move forward in small, often very small, steps, with buttocks prominently thrust out, and wagging their hips. There is no fixed number of dancers. The dance has such an irresistible attraction for the Hottentots that any group of dancers rapidly grows in size. Mothers with babies on their backs, women returning to the kraal with firewood or other burdens, attach themselves to the ring; even old matrons whose sight is failing, says von François, become as if electrified when they hear the dance music, and dance like energetic flappers!

¹ Op. cit., 27-8.² Ibid., 52-60, *passim*.³ Ibid., 28; cf. Wilson, "Bericht von van Plettenberg," 127.⁴ Schöten, op. cit., 31-2; von François, op. cit., 228; Schulze, op. cit., 377.

535 Many of the profane dances have special themes. Some of them are purely pantomimic. One such dance, described by Schultze,¹ may serve to illustrate the wealth of imitative action with which they are enacted. The theme is that of a hyena slinking round a sheep kraal at night and being discovered. The pantomimic representation of this theme, with its reed music, its song and its dance, is extremely delightful. The men line up in a semicircle, as do also the women opposite them. The circle formed in this way, with its two opposing entrances where the line of men approaches that of the women, represents a sheep kraal, and the women the sheep. Amid the singing and the notes of the reed music of all those standing in the circle, one of the men leaves the line, and in a crouching posture, with sharply-bent knees, slinks into the interior of the "kraal" and along the line of women, with all the gestures of a bloodthirsty hyena. After a while three other men from the line make as if riding for the same opening through which the hyena has entered. In bearing and gesture they mimic the tying-up of their horses, then discover the tracks of the hyena and follow them, until suddenly they notice the animal. They hasten back to their horses and take up the pursuit. The hyena meanwhile has made for the open, but is overtaken outside the "kraal" and killed. During the whole of this performance the women uninterruptedly sing at the "hyena" the words: *!H1-ra-se, kxoin xūn gye, !go-be-se, kxoin xūn gye*, "Hyena, this (the sheep in the kraal) is the property of men!"

533 Other dances and their songs depict scenes of hunting or battle. Wikar describes one mimicking a rhinoceros hunt,² Hahn another in which a hero dies bravely in battle and is left a prey to the vultures, until his friends, having defeated the enemy, return and collect his bones into a grave, at the same time singing a very doleful burial song.³ Another dance of this type, seen often by von François in Windhoek, is based on the historical incident of the "murder" of Jan Jonker by Hendrik Witbooi. The men group themselves in two parties, one with white hatbands, the other with red. The latter, representing Jonker's people, dance first, as if believing themselves safe, and the women dance round them. Then to the same melody and time the Witboois dance up out of the darkness towards the camp of the Jonkers. Suddenly they are noticed by the latter, the women spring aside and begin, standing still and clapping their

¹ Op. cit., 380-1; others are described on pp. 377-80² Op. cit., 127-8.³ Op. cit., 228-9.

KNOWLEDGE OF DISEASE

405

hands, to take up the melody, while the men forming into line range themselves against the Witboois and in a crouching posture continue playing on their reed pipes. The Witboois also form into line, and send forward a messenger, who advances and then returns, always playing on his pipe and hopping up and down. Next one of the red-hatted men, representing Jan Jonker, dances up to the Witboois, and, still blowing on his pipe, shakes several of them by the hand. Meanwhile a Witbooi in the same manner circles round the group of women, representing the cattle, and after inspecting them all returns to his party. Now the murder of Jan Jonker is enacted, so too his men dancing up to his aid are massacred, and finally the Witboois dance away with the plundered cattle and women. The whole dance, with its wealth of action and skilful performance, is a most interesting illustration of the imitative talent of the Hottentots and their fertile imagination. In this respect, at least, they equal the Bushmen, even although they have not the grand masquerade dances performed by the latter.

533
535

Dancing itself without music and song is seldom practised, but singing without musical accompaniment is common.¹ Most of the songs are based on actual incidents affording a suitable theme; others are love songs; and Hahn mentions still another type, known as *gares*, which Hottentot mothers or nurses are in the habit of extemporizing in praise of a child while washing or anointing it.² The verbal text of these songs is generally very simple in character, and not always rigidly fixed. When singing in chorus, individuals will often add motives of their own to the text, which after shorter or longer intervals they always repeat anew with slight variations. But they are able in doing so to weave their motive harmoniously, into the melody of the other singers. Nowadays the songs are often church hymns or popular Dutch folk ditties, and the reed pipes are often replaced by the mouth organ or concertina, but the musical sense of the people is as lively as ever, and they find their principal recreation in its exercise.

[177]

KNOWLEDGE OF DISEASE AND DOCTORING

The Hottentots on the whole do not enjoy robust health. The slender body, often weakened by inadequate and irregular food, uncleanness, excessive indulgence in alcohol and tobacco, and privations of all sorts, has little power of resistance. The early writers

147

¹ Schapera, *op. cit.*, 381-2.² *Op. cit.*, 107, 28-9.

stop," as Katrina says, and no pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return." The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the *abá tarás* takes her share, which must always be part of the outer flesh, inside. While the girl and her friends sit in the *khard óms*, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can, the fire which is always made in the centre line of the hut, just a little way inside the door, is *lnau* and nothing must be cooked at this fire at all. Everyone must *fkarešin* for the girl. Thus no pregnant or menstruating woman must come and sit by the fire, nor must a sterile woman, lest dire things befall the girl in the *khard óms*. All this time too, she will be careful not to touch cold water on any pretense whatever. No man or boy would come near her for fear of dread consequences to himself.

As the time of the girl's seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions, regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the village begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined. Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the girl is placed in front of the *lnau* fire, and is cleaned¹² with moist cow dung (*shoup*) and *lnaup* from head to foot by the old woman who carried her into the hut, to clean off all the *áxe /wip*.¹³ The *abá tarás* smears the *shoup* all over the body of the girl, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in handfuls, *shoup* and *wip*, for the Hottentots allow plenty of it to gather. She then collects it carefully and hides it in an ant heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is then given a complete new set of clothing and the old woman carries off the old one. Meantime a ewe has been slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to the *abá tarás*. This she must now cook on the fire in the house, the first cooking done there since the girl entered the *khard óms*. When the meat is cooked, it is eaten by the *abá tarás* and other women who, like her, are past childbearing. No one else touches it. Then the *abá tarás* takes the fire, ashes and all, and dumps it far from the house. She then sprinkles fresh sand on the hearth and lays a new fire. This fire must not be lit from another fire, as is usually done when a fire goes out. It must be lit with flint. Most Hottentots use tinder boxes nowadays, matches being a rare luxury. No doubt originally the fire was lighted with the firesticks which were certainly in use among them.¹⁴ The fire thus lit is now no longer *lnau*. *Neseki ómas ho shau*¹⁵, or *khe tari wai ni shau* ("now the

¹² //Am *sháim*, "the cleaning before going out".

¹³ Literally "boy dirt".

¹⁴ Cf. T. Hahn, *Tswai-//Gosam*, p. 77.

¹⁵ *shau*, "true" or "right", e. g., *shau shau* "the right path".

house is free so that anyone can come in"). The girl is now ready to receive visits as an 881
ǃaxais, that is, a young marriageable woman. All her relatives and friends pour in,
 each one with some present of beads, or earrings, or other finery. A great deal of this is [431]
 loaned only and is returned later. The girl shines with clean, well-greased skin. She
 is scented all over with the *sāp* which she and her girl friends have ground. Her face is [302]
 painted in curious patterns with *lnaop* and */qaaab* ("ground white stone"), and her
 body is loaded with her presents. Then it is that the little boys, even up to sixteen years
 and more,¹⁸ come into the hut from which they have up to now been excluded, and go in
 to the newly made *ǃaxais*. She takes her */ǃros dms* ("powder puff") full of *sāp* and rubs
 their testicles (*-kardn*). This ensures fertility and is a protection against sexual disease. [842
 751]
 The full expression for this custom is */ǃros dms /a /nara* ("to rub gently with a powder
 puff"). Nowadays the saying is that until the boys have been rubbed, it is too dangerous
 for them to eat any of the meat prepared for the girl, and the younger ones especially go
 eagerly in, so that they may join in the feast. Some of the youths, according to Hannah,
 prefer to go without the meat, and none of my witnesses had ever seen grown-up men take
 part. It looks as though the custom were gradually dying out.

The feasting reaches its climax on this day. Female animals, both ewes and heifers,
 are killed, cooked, and eaten. It is interesting to note that the goat is never used in these [231
 177]
 ceremonial meals, if it can possibly be avoided. This is probably due to the fact that
 originally the Hottentots owned no goats, and only acquired them quite late from the
 Bantu tribes with whom they came in contact.

Towards evening the girl's friends enter the hut to fetch her out. She must leave the 881
 hut by the special door which has been made for her at the back.¹⁹ Her friends surround 535
 her, and for a time try to keep her from the view of the youths, for she is very shy. The
 youths start the reed dance, and the girls dance round them with the *ǃaxais* in their
 midst. Gradually the youths get to the side of the girl and choose her as a partner, and in
 the end her shyness gives way. In these Hottentot dances the men form the inner ring,
 the women the outer one, and every now and then there is a change of partners somewhat
 like the English game of Jolly Miller. During the dancing the *ǃaxais* throws *sāp* over the
 men and boys as she sees them. This is supposed to bring good luck. The dancing lasts
 often right through the night, and when it is over, the final round of rites begins, reintro-
 ducing the girl to her daily tasks, freeing her, as it were, from the spell under which she
 has been living.

The *abá taris* must accompany the *ǃaxais* in all these rites, but often her friends go 881

¹⁸ According to T. Hahn, in older days, all but extremely old men took part in this ceremony. Cf. also L. [177]
 Schultze, *Am Namaaland und Kalahari*, Jena, 1907, p. 208.

¹⁹ A corpse is also taken out by a special door made for the purpose at the back of the hut.

773 graves of his are to be found in the Cape Colony as well as
 776 in Nama- and Hereroland. He who passes these graves, consisting of stones piled up along old native paths, must lay a stone, a twig or something to this description on the grave in salutation to him, lest he meet with an accident on his way. I was interested to know whether there were really human remains under these often stately monuments of piled up stones. Indeed, I was told that nothing of the kind was to be found under these heaps of stone, as Heiseb was resurrected; but I did not believe these sayings. I, however, found that the earth under these sepulchral monuments was indeed empty. This curious incident instigated me to investigate this matter further as such heaps of stone, worshipped by all natives, are found in all parts of South West and what, is more, their worship was even known at the Cape according to old reports. My study of the Bushmen probably brought me on the right track and the customs of the Ovambo indicate similar phenomena. Up to this day the Ovambo pile up the hard fruit of a certain tree on the boundaries of the territory they lay claim to, to serve as beacons which are respected everywhere.

773 Among the Tjimba I found that they demark their pastures
 776 at certain points of the boundary with heaps of stones. Un-
 621 less all the information is fallacious, the Bushmen, who were the only inhabitants of South West in olden times, also knew this custom. They erected stone beacons at those places where strangers used to cross their tribal boundaries on foot, i.e., where there were old paths. The implication of this for the strange hunter and gleaner was that all their activities within these boundaries would be regarded as robbery. It is not improbable that both the Ovambo and the Tjimba of the Kaokoveld took over this way of demarking their tribal boundaries from the Bushmen.

Afterwards when the Bushmen had to evacuate their country for the new immigrants, the Hottentots, Bergdama, Herero, etc., these boundary-marks appeared to them as graves, which were revered as the graves of their own ancestors by piling stones on them.

The myth now included these imposing tokens of love and called them Heitsi-eibeb, i.e., place, where Heiseb lingers.

773 5. The moon plays a very great rôle in the Nama mythology.
 821 It was she who brought death to humanity by means of a wrong message. Up to then humanity had been immortal, but her words: "As I die and live again—new moon and waxing moon—so will ye also die and live again," were conveyed in a contrary sense by the hare. They expect the same things from the moon that they obtain by entreating Tsui-

782 //Goab. Prayers were also sent up to her at the occasions
 535 of their moonlight dances. Similar dances of a religious
 178 character were also organised in the beginning of Spring when the Pleiades appeared. Now-a-days the prayers have

been done away with, the worship has ceased but the moon-⁷⁸²
light dances are still in vogue and are still regularly got up ⁵³⁵
here and there. 178

The majority of the Nama have become Christians, taking a pride in being called Christians, more or less. Heathenism has been cast into oblivion to such an extent that the investigator can hardly expect any results from his researches even among the old heathens still left in out of the way places.

VI. WITCHCRAFT AND SUPERSTITION.

1. As is the case in all other religions, so also in the Nama ⁷⁷¹
religion does the worship go hand in hand with partly stable, partly ever-changing superstitious beliefs and customs. The skilled eye of the investigator will be able to discriminate between the two, and know how to keep these domains of religion and of superstition distinctly apart. In spite of the fact that these two are so closely related in the consciousness of the tribe, that the one always contains the other, yet the characteristic feature that a tribe forgets its religion and exchanges it for another, much more easily than it gives up its superstitions, will not go by unobserved. For this reason it is not to be wondered at that the reports about the hereditary religion of the Nama are very sparse and difficult to understand, whereas the superstitions can easily be investigated and related and that witchcraft is still in force, being indulged in secretly, reservedly, avoiding all publicity in one place or unashamedly and publicly in another, according to circumstances. [754]

2. The Nama belief in immortality is hardly stronger than ⁷⁷⁵
their fear of ghosts. Everywhere they relate of departed souls of olden as well as modern times, which have reappeared in some form or another.

No wonder that the heathens never laid out graves ⁷⁶⁴
jointly, but buried their dead somewhere in a solitary place ⁷⁷⁵
and secured the grave with heavy stones. This does not only happen because they want to protect the corpse against being damaged by the animals of the desert, but actually also in order to prohibit them from rising up again.

Heiseb, who has already been mentioned, for this reason entreated his subjects to cover him up with "soft stones," when he died, as he had the intention of rising from the grave and would be impeded by "hard stones."

They regard many symptoms on the body of a dying per- ⁷⁶³
son, or on the bodies of relatives, and above all, strange ways of behaviour among animals, as precursors of death.

3. He who treads on a grave, passes one unmindfully, or ⁷⁶⁹
points at a grave with his finger has disturbed the rest of ⁷⁸⁷
the dead and must expect his revenge. When the corpse of ⁷⁶¹
an acquaintance or a relative appears to one in a dream, he

by their names. In their communications they have titles of honour in accordance with the degree of relationship. 593
576

It might be mentioned here that the missionaries have succeeded in introducing family names which were unknown to the Nama before. These family names are derived from the Nama language, the heathen names of the grandfathers and great-grandfathers being changed into the family names of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Only the Orlam tribes have family names which were given to them by their masters in the Cape, *e.g.*, Teapot, Vlermuis, Afrikaner, etc., etc. 551
[619]

8. Their old national dress is very seldom worn. It consisted of home-dressed skins which were worn as aprons in front and at the back with a leather belt; and a large skin which served as a cloak and blanket and, twisted over the right shoulder and underneath the left arm, served as a bag for the gatherer of veld-kos. 291

At present both men and women go clad in European clothes. Coloured designs are preferred. While the Herero women have clung to the mode of dress introduced by the wives of missionaries 60 years ago, the Nama has not adopted any permanent national dress for the women and girls. [177]

9. Instead of the old anointing of the body with fat, they have resorted to cleaning themselves with water and soap, although everywhere Nama, who regard the application of soap and water as detrimental to health, are still to be found. 302
[515]

The habit of the women to powder their bodies with "buchu" which they make for themselves by powdering a great variety of shrubs and roots, is still in vogue to-day, and there are still women who hideously paint their faces with a blackish red salve during the period of menstruation, or early pregnancy and on cold winter days. [341
843]

10. The Nama is not miserly or avaricious. What he has in the form of food or other means of enjoyment he shares in the first place with his family and also with strangers. 574

To smoke alone or to eat a piece of bread which has been obtained accidentally is regarded as very unbecoming. Servants who labour for Europeans and receive their food there are wont to carry part of a special tit-bit home to share it with their people, unless the master, not knowing the Nama custom, should demand that all be eaten before his eyes so that his servants, for whom it is intended, may have the benefit of it and not strangers. [576]

11. The Nama is decidedly inclined to sociability. It is his wont to squat or sit on a low chair near the fireside at night and to tell to the last details and discuss the news of the day; nor do they separate till very late in the night. The Christians like sitting round the fire at night untiringly singing their songs and hymns. They still take great pleasure in the Reed-dance on bright moonlight nights. On 571
536
[521]

571 such occasions the men provide music by means of flutes made
 535 of reeds and the women and girls perform old national dances,
 clapping their hands, singing, and stamping with their feet.
 Yet these nocturnal dances are not always harmless, for their
 feelings being aroused they lightly indulge in immoral ex-
 cesses, and on the following morning squabbles of jealousy
 do not fail to arise.

147 12. The Nama does not enjoy robust health. The slender
 body, often weakened by dissoluteness and irregular food has
 no power of resistance. During the cold season they catch

[64] severe colds, and consumption and venereal diseases demand
 many victims. They hardly know how to nurse themselves

[45] when ill and often resort to ridiculous measures. For this
 reason they grow old very soon and at the age of fifty
 consider themselves senile. The nursing of people who are

758 dangerously ill leaves much to be desired and when they have
 lost hope of recovery they leave off indulging hopelessly in
 hopeless nursing. Burial in a squatting position with a skin

764 wrapped round the corpse, in a round grave 1½ metres deep,
 177 in a lonely spot in the open fields is now only prevalent in

far-off places, for the Christian way of burying has generally
 been adopted. They make a flat coffin of planks which they
 have picked up—or of cheap boxes—paint it black, enclose in
 it the corpse and sink the coffin into a grave in the grave-
 yard for natives, which exists in all the larger towns. The
 grave is furnished with large rocks at its head and foot and
 is often neatly and tastefully covered with small stones.
 Well-to-do families erect on the grave a wooden cross with an
 epitaph; and cut stones with inscriptions on them are not
 uncommon; but they have not yet adopted the custom of
 looking after their graves. Before it became the custom to
 inter in coffins, a grave was dug with its deepest part resem-
 bling a coffin. Half-way it broadened out on both sides, on
 each of which a step was made. The corpse, wrapt in skins
 or blankets and laid flat on the ground, would then be
 covered with wooden poles on which the excavated earth was
 thrown, so as not to be in direct contact with the corpse.
 These three modes of burial are still all in vogue, reminding
 one of the old epoch, the transition period and the modern
 time with its interments conducted in the Christian and
 European way.

VIII. LANGUAGE AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE.

197 1. At the very first meeting of Europeans with the Hotten-
 tots of the Cape Colony the peculiarity of their language
 attracted attention and for a long time it was believed that
 it could not be learnt by adults. Dr. Ol. Dapper, whose book
 about South Africa was published in 1668, writes about it as
 follows:—

8: Dapper Q-4 (no date) 1933

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Cape Hottentot

KAFFRARIA OR LAND OF THE HOTTENTOTS

21

out of their villages with their women and children, until there were about two or three hundred of them, men, women and children, in and about the Fort. 728
159

After a short while Gogosoa himself, chief of the Goringhaiquas (Capemen), came with the request that he too wished to lay down his weapons together with Chief Chore. And now the Fort became so crowded that there was scarcely room to stand.²⁷⁾ Then at the command of Governor Riebeeck a whole cask full of brandy, with a wooden cup in it, was put down in the midst of all the Hottentots. Everyone now began to make good cheer, and to enjoy himself by drinking heartily. The women, too, who were all squatting down with their children, swilled down the brandy like water; although some, out of innocence, drank nothing at all, and others only a little. 728
[622]
728
273

When the men began to get giddy and their legs to stagger, so that often they fell to the ground, about two or three hundred pieces of tobacco, each an inch wide, were flung amongst them by handfuls to be scrambled for. Whereupon there ensued such a great clamour and din amongst them that they almost drowned all hearing, and the ringing of the ears became scarcely tolerable. Their uproar was no less violent when after that the same thing was done with bread. After all this scrambling was over, and they had drunk themselves full and were tipsy with the wine, they began to dance and jump about continuously with strange gestures and in a peculiar manner, almost like the bakers over here work the dough in the trays with their feet, by stamping, now with the one foot and then with the other, their buttocks sticking out, and the head always inclined on the one side to the ground. The women were no less jolly during the dancing of the men, clapping their hands and all along singing the self-same song of *ha, ho, ho, ho*, for wellnigh two hours on end. The sound of this singing and handclapping of the women could easily be heard a gunshot away from the Fort. They shout loudly and make an uproar in the same way at night, whenever they observe the approach of some wild beast like the lion or leopard, so that the beast, terrified by the unfamiliar din, slinks away. 728
152
728
535
[533]

²⁷⁾ The description that follows agrees fairly closely with the account given in D., May 6, 1660.

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Cape Hottentot



291
534
535 ●

HOTTENTOT DANCES AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

(1. Gom-Gom; 2. Rommelpot.)

[After Kolb.

[facing p 132]

000 arborem. 9. ad *) casas anserinas. 10 ad *) flumen latum.
11. ad paradisum, locum propter amoenitatem ita appel-
latum: ubi ex argillaceae terrae, aquas inquinantis, copia
magna boni laticis inopia est. 12. Ultimo denique ad *)
concharum solum, qui cxxxvi. circiter leucis a Propugnaculo
distat.

CAP. XIX.

De modo saltandi.

Tripudiis, quae miris gesticulationibus exercent, summo-
pere gaudere videntur: cum, si vel minimus in illis religionis
sensus sit, illam saltationis ritu maxime peragant. Quam-
primum enim luna exsurgit, undique concurrunt. Mares
prono corpore pedibus fortiter pulsant humum, unisono,
sed vel remissione vel intentione, ejulatu boantes,
vultu semper aequae gravi; ubi feminae circum-
sedentes maribus plaudunt canentes. Quod s. forte
in nostratium aedibus speculum offendant, ridiculo
gargalismo animum titillant, propria cum *Narcissa*
delectati forma, mimicis gestibus in effusos dissolvuntur
saltus, ut saepe defessi prosternantur; sicuti saepius ab
Hottentotto juvene, in nostro hospitio famulante, consperi.

CAP. XX.

De Religionē.

Barbara licet & plane brutalis haec natio, ut inter eas
a) gentes, quae legem etiam non habent, naturae quae
legis sunt, faciunt, recenseri non possit exlex. Attamen
summi cujusdam *Entis* vel leviculam cognitionem habere
videntur, saepe de supremo quodam *Capitane* memorans:

- a) de ganse krallen.
- b) brede rivier.
- c) Mossel-baey.
- d) Roman. cap. 2.

487

*I take this to be a mistake for Kafferkuils rivier. Mossop
(V.R.S. 12, Appendix C) identifies Caffer Kuils rivier (doubtfully)
with Palmiet Rivier in the Caledon district, which suits this
passage. Mossop's notes to his translation of Schrijver's journey
to the East (op. cit.) give the best information available on this
whole itinerary. (B.F.)

[535]

821
77/

a) Most of the early writers on the Hottentots state that at
new moon and at full moon the people spent the night in dancing,
singing and merrymaking. None of them, however, declare
explicitly that the Hottentots worshipped the moon, except for
Kolb, who says that they looked on the Moon as their visible

River;* (5) to Knoslocha Krallen; (6) to Botter River; (7) to Rivier Sonder Eynde; (8) at six days' journey from the Fort, Jacob Ragen's Boom; (9) Ganse Krallen; (10) Brede River; (11) at Paradise, a place so called on account of its charm, where by reason of the prevalence of clayey soil which colours it, there is a scarcity of good water; (12) the last stage, to Mossel Bay, about 136 leucæ distant from the Fort.

CHAP. XIX.

Their Mode of Dancing.

They take the greatest delight in dancing, which they perform with astonishing gesticulations. If they have the least feeling for religion, it is in the observance of the dance that they most show it. As soon as the moon rises, they run together from all sides. The males, with their bodies leaning forward, stamp on the ground vigorously with their feet, lustily chanting in unison with rising and falling intensity, and with a fixed expression of seriousness on their faces; the women sit round in a circle clapping and singing.⁽¹⁾

If by chance they encounter a mirror in the houses of our countrymen, charmed like Narcissus by their own appearance, they express their amusement and delight by a ridiculous display, abandoning themselves to a wild pantomimic dance before the mirror until often they collapse with exhaustion. I have frequently observed this in the case of a Hottentot youth, a slave in the house where we lodged.

CHAP. XX.

Religion.

Though this nation is barbarous and brutish, yet, since it is numbered among those peoples who though they have not the law yet do the things that are of the law of nature, it cannot be regarded as being utterly lawless. They seem even to have some slight knowledge of a supreme being, since they often speak of a Great Chief; for when the

God, which they called Gounja, or "Great Chief", and who gives the words of a prayer addressed to it. Roos and Marais, in 1763, also record an invocation to the moon. The evidence is on the whole very slight, but if taken in association with the fact that the allied Bushmen unquestionably prayed to the Moon, there seems no good reason to doubt that the Hottentots also revered the earth's satellite, which figures so prominently too in their mythology. The question is discussed more fully by Schapera, *op. cit.*, 375-6.

534 which was used to contain milk. This jar is, of course, the well-known *bombus* of the early writers. A goatskin was procured, and all the hair was removed. While wet and soft, this skin was stretched over the mouth of the *//hoes*, secured in position by a piece of *riem*, and allowed to dry. The performer seated herself upon the ground, placed the *//hoais* on the earth before her, and struck it with the flat palm of her right hand. It was used as a rhythmic accompaniment to the songs which were sung during certain dances. I was unable to ascertain whether any attempt was made to tune the instrument to a particular note, as has been suggested by Burchell in the case of the "water-drum" which he saw played by Bushmen; but it is quite conceivable that such tuning may have been practised by the Korana, when one considers their use of stringed instruments. The usual method of adjusting the pitch of drums employed by Natives of South Africa is to wet the drum skin and then place the instrument in the sun or before a fire until the tension appears to the player to be satisfactory.

There can be no doubt that the *//hoais* of the Korana is the drum for long associated with the Hottentots, being depicted and described again and again by travellers, and wrongly named by the Dutch Colonists *rommelpot*. It would appear that the early Hollanders, seeing the Hottentots with a drum made from a pot covered with skin, rechristened the instrument with the name given by people of their own nation to a kind of drum made from similar materials by the children in the south of Holland, and used by them at Christmas time. A full account of this instrument, together with the melody and words of the song which was sung to its accompaniment, will be found in the third and fourth volumes of the catalogue of the Instrumental Museum of the Brussels Conservatoire. But the true *rommelpot* was a *friction* drum, the sound being produced by rubbing the moistened fingers up and down a reed one end of which was secured to the centre of the drum skin. This method of sound production on a drum was, so far as I have been able to discover, unknown to the Korana, as also was the name *rommelpot*.

534 Arbousset's description of this drum of the Korana women is worth
 535 recalling here (I quote from the English translation by John Crombie
 Brown, London, 1852, page 54) "Consuming a great part of the day in
 smoking, and leaving their children covered with vermin, and their
 houses in a state of the most disgusting filth, like the men they reserve
 all their activity and vigour for the *sukhis* or *pot-dance*. When the moon
 enters her first quarter, all the kraal assemble on some favourite elevation;
 then they dance to the sound of the tang-tang, all the night long, and
 sometimes for eight nights in succession. In this amusement the

13: Kirby R-5 (1931-1932) 1932

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Korana

THE MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE KORANA

185

Korannas place no control on their passions, and abandon themselves to excesses of which it would be a shame even to speak." The so-called "tang-tang" in this description is explained in another passage by Arbousset, in which he describes a similar dance by the Baroa (Hottentots) of Mokoma (Arbousset; English translation p. 353). "Supper being over, the women with their children and the young men set themselves to dance during the first watches of the night, to the sound of a wretched tan-tan" (the French term for a gong, but occasionally applied to drums by some writers, e.g. *Catalogue du Musée Instr., Bruxelles*, vol. 4, p. 3) "made of a small earthen pot, in the form of a quoit, and covered with the skin of a garelle, well softened after having been stripped of its hair."

534

535

2. Wind Instruments

(a) Signal whistle named //arep /as. This instrument consisted of the shin-bone of a springbok, or the leg bone of an ostrich, one end of which was sheared off at right angles to its length, and the marrow removed. A piece of *riem* was attached to it so that it could be suspended from the shoulder of the player. It was sounded by being held against the tongue of the performer in the same way as the *Ɔa:di* (to be described next) were held, and it yielded a shrill penetrating note of considerable carrying power. It was used by the chief for summoning together the men of his tribe, and it was worn and blown by his headmen.

534

A similar whistle is described by Kolbe as being used in battle by the Hottentots, who employed it to direct operations in the field. One of his plates actually shows the whistle-signallers of two opposing armies each seated upon an eminence, apparently controlling the respective forces. My Korana informants, however, knew nothing of this practice, and, had it been in use among them, it is certain that the older men would have known it in view of the fact that some of the Links people (including Tabab, one of my informants) were actually engaged in battle at Matsosa so recently as 1885.

534

726

202

[115]

(b) Reed-flute ensemble, called Ɔa:di.

This was formerly by far the most important musical feature of the Korana, since it was not only an organised ensemble of many performers, but was really part of the social life of the people. Although it has in the past been frequently noted among the Nama and also the Bechuana, there are but few references in the works of travellers and others to its existence among the Korana. These are Wikar, 1778-9, Wuras, 1858, Seow, 1880, Engelbrecht, 1928, and Meinhof, 1930. But while the

534

534 descriptions in Wikar and Wurra give a fair account of the nature of the ensemble, Stow's description is entirely erroneous. This is the more to be regretted since Stow's famous work *The Native Races of South Africa* is much more accessible and widely read than the writings of the other travellers.

533 Hendrik Jakob Wikar, in his Report to Baron J. von Plattenberg on
536 his journey to the Orange River, 1778-9, described the Korana reed-dance as follows. "They now entertained us with dances and flutes, and on my second trip I understood that they had talked to the other people about their advantage in having seen me; they also had then made for the flute dance a song about me, the rhinoceros dance which I have already described among the Gericquas, and which I had found to be not unpleasant to see, by the side of the flute dance. To this last sometimes also belongs the mourning song of a woman, whose husband has been slain in war. The song has the following content. She sees herself as a widow with her children, bereft of the care of her husband and their father, and herself pledged to hunt the game which her husband formerly provided. She hopes that she may live long, so that her son will be old enough to fill his father's place and hunt the game for her. For that dance each of the men is provided with a flute, and they form themselves into a circle. Some have large flutes, others small; one man stands with his flute in the middle of the circle. He first begins the dance, and the song, with words; whereupon those standing in the circle begin likewise to dance round and round and at the same time to blow upon their flutes. The tone of the large flute is never introduced into the song unless it fits in with it. The large flute is especially heard when the song is finished; so they dance very curiously, stamping their feet in time. The women dance round the circle one after another, clapping their hands, and here also happens something which reminds one of carouses, for, as they dance round and round, one or two men sink out of the circle. Thereupon they clasp each other tightly; he who has come out of the circle dances beside a woman, and draws gently upon the strings of her fore-kaross, upon which she seems " (feigns) " to threaten him."

534 According to Wikar, the reed-flutes were made from river-reed,
411 from which arrows were also made. "Their arrows," he said, with which they shoot wild animals are generally iron "harpoons"; and they also use on the tip of the reed-arrow a sharp-pointed white stone in place of the iron "harpoon," because the stone often breaks into pieces in the body of the wild animal. The other arrows are made of sharp gamshook bone, etc., which is stuck inside the flute-reed." In his description of the Hartbeeste Rivier, Wikar points out that it is thickly overgrown with

13: Kirby R-5 (1931-1932) 1932

FX13 Hottentot FX13

Korana

THE MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE KORANA 187

"Vaderlandes of Suijterriet." The Hartsenstrijter, is, of course, a tributary of the Orange on the South side, about Long. 20½, Lat. 29½. 133

Wiese, in his *An Account of the Korana* (MSB. 1858), states on p. 295 (reprinted in *Bantu Studies*, Vol. III, p. 287), "The Aa (the reed play or dance). The day on which the play begins, the men make flutes of reed all of which must have the same tone" (sic). "They then stand in a circle, the music master comes round and listens, if all the flutes are in tune. When he declares them to be in unison," (sic) "the dance commences. The men blowing the flute move in time in a circle; the women form a second circle, and, enclosing the men, dance round them clapping their hands. The dance lasts the whole night. The greatest immorality prevails during these plays, of which there are several. In some of them they imitate the howls and cries of different animals, and at sunrise the men rush to the kral and catch the sheep and goats for the day's feast, howling like many wolves." 533 535

Engelbrecht and Meinhof practically confine themselves to giving the name and simple definitions of the instrument. Engelbrecht calls the flute *gib* and describes it as "a flute made of reed. Of these, different sizes existed, and the tone was also different. The people stood in a circle, and thereupon played and danced." Meinhof calls the reed-flute *q'i'd* and the reed-dance *q'i'd-a-d-b*, and further states, "They" (the Korana) "have no drum," (sic) "but like the Nama, they have a reed-flute. The women sing and the men play upon the reed-flute." 534

My informants were the oldest men, since the reed-dance has been completely stamped out by the missionaries, some of whom have recorded their pleasure at succeeding in eradicating it. In the Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Year 1830, p. 44, written from Phasberg, occurs the following statement regarding the Korana. "During the last year we have got several hymns into use among the people whom we frequently hear singing them in their private houses; and the rapidity with which the songs of Zion supplant the melancholy lull" (printer's error for *gura*, v. infra) "and the whistling reed is truly surprising." This then, was the view of the missionary Archbell, shared, it may be added, by many other missionaries. This particular mission was started in 1827 and ended in 1833. That the "songs of Zion" had no very lasting effect upon the Korana will be seen when their vocal music is discussed. One old man, named Matini, undertook to make several reed-flutes for me. The proper material was, they said, river reed, but as the only available supplies in the Vaal River were either distant or in deep water, they only procured one stem as a sample. This 533 177 747 534 524 115

but if they got the proper material for him he would show them (he called them "boys") how flutes should be made. I shall have more to say about old Daab when discussing stringed instruments and vocal music. 534
115

The reeds were kept by one man who acted as the leader in the reed-dance. A case made of a piece of a tree trunk hollowed out by a curved iron tool was used for keeping the reeds in. This hollow wooden case was suspended by a rim from the branch of a tree, so that the flutes might be kept in shade. They were not kept inside a hut since the heat of the fire would tend to dry up the plugs and tubes. But whenever the reeds got too dry for use, they would be thoroughly soaked in water. Should a reed split, it could often be made usable, if not too far gone, by being "whipped" with wet rushes, which, when dry, drew the edges of the crack close together. In place of the wooden flute-case a bag of cowskin was often used. 534

Women never played the reed-flutes (this directly contradicts Stow); only grown men might perform upon them. Immediately after they had passed through the *diro* or initiation ceremony, the boys would be taught the steps of the reed-dance, and how to play upon the flute. The leader, who was called */khan's /khanab*, was the teacher. The men, having been provided with their reed-flutes by their leader, would stand in a circle, and would move round, dancing, counter-clockwise. The men's dance steps involved a leaping movement. The women formed a wider circle outside that of the men, and executed a graceful tripping measure quite different from that of the men, and moved in the opposite direction. Occasionally, however, they would roll their buttocks about in characteristic manner. The flutes were sounded in succession, beginning with the highest in pitch, which was played by the leader. The women clapped their hands in time to the music of the flutes. Owing to the fact that a proper set of flutes was not obtainable, I was unable to arrive at the pitch of the various pipes, but a curious point arises in this connection of which I shall speak when describing the songs of the Korana. 533
562
868
535

The names given to the first four flutes were as follows. 534

- (1) *gila: rpha: n*
- (2) *hamsi*
- (3) *paippha: n*
- (4) *hamsi*

The meaning of the third of these names is "the big reed," which particular flute appears to function as a kind of "tonic," since from it the

534 others are tuned. I could obtain no names for any other flutes; the Korana said that they merely "followed on."

536 In December 1931, Professor Maingard obtained a description of
115 the reed-flute dance, his informant being Saul van Eck, an old Kora who also supplied me with information. The ~~reeds~~ *reeds*, he said, were played by men moving in a circle (~~in a circle~~ *in a circle*). In the middle of the circle was a man with a stick who beat the time. The minimum number of reed-flutes was three, which had the same names as the first three on my list above. But there were often as many as twelve, or even fourteen or more players. The whole kraal would join in the dance, even if they were not playing. The women stamped round in an outer circle, clapping their hands (*iac //am*) and shaking their buttocks (*//kare Akuedi*). Four o'clock in the afternoon (*kaka kororo:p*) was the right time to begin the dance, which lasted until morning (*//kara:he*). Oxen were killed for the dancers.

536 After considerable questioning we succeeded in eliciting the information
621 that occasionally there was a kind of "competition" between
786 kraals, in which the reed-dance played a very important part. There
787 can be little doubt that it was this aspect of the dance that roused the missionaries against it, although unquestionably their practice has always been to eradicate all forms of music peculiar to the peoples whom they wish to convert, and in its place to impose that to which they themselves have been accustomed. The inhabitants of one kraal would visit those of another, who met the visitors half-way, the women of each kraal accompanying their men. Oxen would be slaughtered by the hosts for the entertainment of the visitors, and the reed-dance would begin, the women of the one kraal dancing with the men of the other. The dance developed into an orgy, the women abandoning themselves to the men. As my informant put it, "they mixed."

114 Stow has given us a description of this practice on pages 114-115,
533 but attributes it to the Bushmen, who, so far as I have been able to find
535 out, never originally played reed-flutes; and on page 116 he states that "The Koranas had a dance which was identical with the one described, but as the Bushmen of the north practised it for generations before the Koranas made their appearance on the banks of the 'Nu'Gariep, it is not improbable that the latter derived their knowledge of it from the older race." But it is necessary to quote a passage written by Stow, which should follow the last paragraph on page 115, and which was ill-advisedly deleted by his editor Theal. I reproduce the passage, copied from Stow's original manuscript, with the kind permission of the Trustees of

the S. A. Public Library, Cape Town, where the manuscript now is. The passage in question was intended as a foot-note and runs: "The women of the Korana tribes had an exactly similar custom of periodically asserting their independence, and visiting the neighbouring kraals in a body, carrying their flutes with them—all the milk of the neighbourhood having been collected at the kraal threatened, when the same scenes of feasting and midnight revels were carried out." I am forced to conclude that Stow was either misinformed or misunderstood his informants when he made the statement that the women were the players. I have searched the records exhaustively in preparing a complete study of all these reed-flute ensembles which I hope to publish shortly, and in no case save that of Stow is there any suggestion that women played the flutes.

These reed-flute ensembles, in which one man contributes one note only, are of particular interest; it would appear that they represent a stage anterior to that of the classical pan-pipe or syrinx. For even though the maker of a set of these reeds may sound several himself by way of testing them, they are never normally so used in actual performance by these people. I have come across only one instance of the practice, and it has obviously arisen through relatively recent European contacts. As it does not concern the Korana I shall not discuss it here.

3. *Stringed Instruments*

(a) The ordinary hunting bow of the Korana was called *Aksa*, and from it three distinct types of stringed instruments appear to have been evolved. The first of these is precisely the same in design and materials as its prototype, save that it is much slenderer and is made specially for musical purposes. This instrument is called *Agabur*; and it consists of a slender stick of seasoned *Agabur*, about thirty inches in length, with the bark removed, and thoroughly smoothed where branches have been cut off. Should the wood be too pliable, it may be dried near a fire until sufficiently rigid, but the Korana preferred to let it dry naturally. A groove is cut at one end of the stick and a string of sinew from the back of an ox fixed in this groove by means of a slip knot. The string is then stretched along the stick and secured at the end by being looped round, that part of the string which passes below the sounding portion acting as a kind of "bridge." The tension is adjusted until a convenient pitch is obtained, the pitch being chosen in such a way that certain harmonics of the string may be readily resonated by the mouth. The end of the instrument at which the string is knotted is placed with its tip against the right hand corner of the mouth, the lips holding it securely, although the mouth behind it is open. The stick must not touch the teeth. The

533 and the performance with dancing is called *lyeib* while
the general profane songs are called *||nai-teanati*, and to
perform them with a dance on reed-pipes, or better, bark-
pipes, is *taba xatra*. The profane reed-dances or reed-

533
535

songs are of a very different nature. Either the fate of
a hero who fell in a battle or lost his life on a hunting
expedition, is deplored; and on such an occasion a per-
formance is connected with it. In such a case the per-
formances have much in common with the mediæval
German "Singspiel." We can also compare them
with our modern operas. If an illustrious stranger visits
a place, he is often welcomed with a reed-dance while
entering the place. Thus the first Moravian missionary,
George Schmidt, who came to the *||Heisiqua* Hottentots
in the Calodon district, was received with a reed-dance.
The Dutch Governor van der Stell, on his journey to the
Copper Mountains, the present Copper mines, was
honoured in the same way. Hop, a burgher of Stellen-
bosch, who in Governor Ryk van Tullagh's time went on
an expedition to Great Namaqualand, received the congra-
tulations of the *||Habobes* at the foot of the *||Kharas*
mountain in a grand reed-dance performance. Alexander
received the same honours from his Namaqua host, the
famous Jonker Afrikaner (*Haramûb*); and up to this time
the traveller, if he only understand how to fraternize
with them, will gladly be admitted to witness their
simple merry-making.

539 If chiefs have become unpopular by some whimsical
or despotic orders, very soon the tongue of the women—
of whom a *Khoekhoi* proverb says "that they cannot be as
long quiet as it takes sweet milk to get sour"—will lecture
him in a sarcastic reed-song. Once I saw a chief sitting
by, when the young girls sung into his face, telling him
"that he was a hungry hyena and a roguish jackal; that
he was the brown vulture who is not only satisfied with
tearing the flesh from the bones, but also feasted on
the intestines." On another occasion, a very old

773 amongst the Namaquas, I took much trouble to add to these fragments. Of what I found I shall give the most important instances as condensed as possible.

Tsüi-||goab.

776 This name is also pronounced Tsu-||goab; this form, however, is the most worn off. Tsü-||goab, Tsüi-||goab, and Tsuni-||goab in Namaqua; and Tsü-||goam, Tsüi-||goam, Tsüi-||khoab and Tsüi-||goab amongst the !Kora, are forms which have preserved more the original feature of the name. This Tsu-||goab is still invoked almost in the same words as George Schmidt heard it at Baviaans Kloof in 1737. The following hymn is still sung among
 533 the !Gami-†nus in the ||Kharas Mountains, amongst the ||Hakobes or so-called Vetschoendragers (sandal-wearers) in the North-east ||Kharas, and by the Gei-||Khous, ||O-geis, and the †Aunis of the !Khomab Mountains
 [92] East of Sandwich harbour. At the time when the
 539 Pleiades first appear above the eastern horizon the people gather for a !gei—i.e., a religious dance—and sing the following:—

533

539

" Tsüi-||goatse !

Thou, oh Tsüi-||goa !

Abo-itsc !

Thou Father of the Fathers—i.e., All Father !

Sida itsc !

Thou our Father !

!Nanuba jarire !

Let stream—i.e., let rain—the thunder cloud !

En "xuna airc !

Let please live (our) flocks !

Eda sida airc !

Let us (also) live please !

†Khainda gum gorol !

I am so very weak indeed !

||Gas xoo !

From thirst !

!As xao !

From hunger !

Ēta = xurina amre !

That I may eat field fruits !

Sats gum xave sida itsao !

Art thou then not our Father ?

Abo itsao !

The father of the fathers !

Tsüi-!goatse !

Thou Tsüi-!goa !

Ēda sida gangantsire !

That we may praise thee !

Ēda sida !khava !khaitisire !

That we may give thee in return (that is, that we may bless thee).

Abo-itsae !

Thou father of the fathers !

Sida !Khutse !

Thou our Lord !

Tsüi-!goatse !

Thou, oh, Tsüi-!goa :

If a heavy thunderstorm is approaching, and the country is resounding from the roaring of the thunder, and the lightnings disperse the darkness, they also assemble for a *!gei*, and, while dancing, sing the following :—

!Gurub di !Geis.

The Hymn of the Thunder.

!Nanumatsae !

Son of the Thundercloud !

!Gari-khoi, !Gurutse !

Thou brave, loud-speaking !Guru !

!Oūse gobare !

Talk softly please !

!Havilē tam u-hā-tamāō !

For I have no guilt !

!Ūvateri !

533
539

Leave me alone! (Forgive me!)

‡Gutago xuiqe!

For I have become quite weak—i.e., I am quite
stunned, I am quite perplexed.

!Gurutse!

Thou, oh !Guru!

!Nanus datse!

Son of the Thundercloud!

[535] Another song-dance I saw performed in the following
manner:—There was a *solo*, sung by a person who played
the part of the lightning; the other part being represented
by the inhabitants of a kraal, of whom a member was
supposed to have been killed by the lightning.

!Nabas di !geis.

The dance-song of the Lightning.

Chorus: !Aibe !nuris !nanuse!

Thou Thundercloud's daughter, daughter-in-law of
the Fire.

Ti !gaba go !gamse!

Thou who hast killed my brother!

!Gaisese gum ab !na !goeo!

Therefore thou liest now so nicely in a hole!

Solo: !Gaise ta go na !gaba a !gam.

(Yes), indeed, I have killed thy brother so well!

Chorus: !Gaisese gum ab !na !goeo.

(Well) therefore thou liest (now) in a hole.

‡Gorob khemi go !usense.

Thou who hast painted thy body red, like ‡Goro!

‡Som-!auba ‡naba tamase!

Thou who dost not drop the "menses."

‡Kxalkha!nabiseb aose!

Thou wife of the Copper-bodied man!

773 An old !Habobe-Nama, by the name of ‡Kxarab, who
had great-grand-children, and told me that he had big
grown-up children when the Mission Station, Warmbad,